

D. TIME LIMITS FOR PROCESSING APPLICATIONS

Purpose: This section includes rules and procedures related to application processing time limits and processing delays.

Effective September 1, 1999

WAC 388-406-0035 Time limits for processing applications.

- (1) The application process as defined in WAC 388-406-0050(1) must be completed as quickly as possible. The time limits specified in this section cannot be used as a waiting period for determining eligibility.
- (2) When applying the time limits specified in this section, day one is the date following the date:
 - (a) A request for benefits form is received by the department as specified under WAC 388-406-0010;
 - (b) A household consisting solely of persons eligible for SSI files a food assistance application at the SSADO; or
 - (c) An SSI recipient applying for food assistance is released from a public institution when the person filed an application with the SSADO before release.
- (3) Time limits are in calendar days unless otherwise specified. Time limits for application process completion are no more than:
 - (a) Thirty days for TANF, SFA, RCA, consolidated emergency assistance program (CEAP), diversion cash assistance (DCA), and food assistance;
 - (b) Forty-five days for general assistance and alcohol and drug abuse treatment and shelter assistance (ADATSA); and
 - (c) Medical program benefits must be processed no more than:
 - (i) Sixty days when a disability decision is required;

- (ii) Fifteen working days for pregnant women; and
- (iii) Forty-five days for all other categories.

Effective July 1, 2002

WAC 388-406-0040 What happens if the processing my application is delayed

- (1) We process your application for benefits as soon as possible. We do not intentionally delay processing your application for benefits for any reason. If we have enough information to decide eligibility for:
 - (a) Food assistance, then we promptly process your request for food assistance even if we need more information to determine eligibility for cash or medical;
 - (b) Medical assistance, then we promptly process your request for medical even if we need more information to determine eligibility for cash or food assistance.
- (2) If your application for food assistance is not processed within the first thirty days and we have enough information to determine eligibility, then we promptly process your application. If additional information is needed to determine eligibility, we give you:
 - (a) A written request for the additional information; and
 - (b) An additional thirty days to provide the information.
- (3) If your application for food assistance has not been processed by the sixtieth day and you are responsible for the delay, then we deny your request for benefits. If we are responsible for the delay, then we:
 - (a) Promptly process your request if we have the information needed to determine eligibility; or
 - (b) Deny your request if we don't have enough information to determine eligibility. If we deny your request we notify you of your right to file a new application and that you may be entitled to benefits lost. If you reapply by the sixtieth day of your first application and are eligible, we give you

benefits lost from:

- (i) The date of your first application if we caused the delay in the first thirty days; or
- (ii) The month following the month of your first application if you caused the delay in the first thirty days.

Effective July 1, 2002

WAC 388-406-0045 Is there a good reason my application for cash or medical assistance has not been processed?

If your application for cash or medical assistance is not processed within the time limits under WAC 388-406-0035, the department must decide if there is a good reason for the delay. This good reason is also called "good cause."

- (1) We do not have a good reason for not processing your application for TANF or SFA within thirty days if:
 - (a) We did not give or send you a notice of what information we needed to determine your eligibility within twenty days from the date of your application;
 - (b) We did not give or send you a notice that we needed additional information or action within five calendar days of the date we learned that more information was needed to determine eligibility;
 - (c) We did not process your application within five calendar days from getting the information needed to decide eligibility; and
 - (d) We decide good cause exists but do not document our decision in the case record on or before the time limit for processing the application ends.
- (2) We do have a good reason for not processing your application timely if:
 - (a) You do not give us the information or take an action needed for us to determine eligibility;

(b)	We have an emergency beyond our control; or
(c)	There is no other available verification for us to determine eligibility and the eligibility decision depends on information that has been delayed such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Medical documentation;(ii) For cash assistance, extensive property appraisals; or(iii) Out-of-state documents or correspondence.
(3)	For medical assistance, good cause exists only when the department otherwise acted promptly at all stages of the application process

CLARIFYING INFORMATION

For cash and medical assistance applications, good cause exists only when the local office meets all processing requirements and the client causes a delay in the process.

EXAMPLE

Client applies for TANF. We schedule an interview appointment timely. The client does not appear for the appointment. The client requests a second appointment on the 29th day following the date of application. Because the client caused the delay, good cause for not processing the application within 30 days exists.